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LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1994 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to resolution 845 (1993) of 18 June 1993 concerning the difference between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, by which, inter alia, the Council requested me to keep it informed on the progress of further efforts under my auspices, and to report on their outcome in good time.

Since my last report (S/26483) Mr. Cyrus Vance has continued his mission of good offices. On 28 September 1993, Mr. Vance convoked the parties again for direct discussions in his presence. The Greek delegation was led by Ambassador George D. Papoulias, Special Envoy, and the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was led by Ambassador Ivan Tosevski, Special Envoy of the President. At the conclusion of those discussions Mr. Vance issued a statement to the press noting that "in view of the forthcoming Greek elections, both parties agree that further direct talks under my auspices on the substance of the remaining issues between them should be deferred until after the holding of the elections on 10 October".

Following the elections in Greece and the installation of the new Government, Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias addressed a letter to me, received on 5 November 1993, regarding the matter. In my reply of 8 November I noted that a solution would "require both parties to demonstrate the necessary political will, mutual respect and a spirit of compromise". I also stated that Mr. Vance and I "stand ready to assist your country and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in your efforts to arrive at a speedy settlement ..." and that "our efforts cannot substitute for those of the parties ...". Since then Mr. Vance has maintained contact with the parties with a view to determining those steps which might lead to progress towards a settlement.

At Mr. Vance's invitation, the parties met separately with him in Geneva on 10 March 1994. Prior to these meetings the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Andreas Papandreou, had made a statement to the Ministerial Council in Athens on 16 February announcing certain measures. The views of the parties concerning these measures were transmitted to me in letters from Foreign Minister Crvenkovski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Foreign Minister of Greece, Karolos Papoulias.

At the parallel discussions in Geneva, the Greek side was led by Foreign Minister Papoulias, accompanied by Secretary-General of the Ministry Zacharakis and others. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was represented by Foreign Minister Crvenkovski, who was accompanied by Ambassador Tosevski. Mr. Vance's talks with both sides were serious and thorough.

Foreign Minister Papoulias stated that a new situation had arisen since the accession to office of the new Government in Athens in November 1993. He reiterated that, before a dialogue could be resumed, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would have to take the steps already made known by his Government, and set forth in his letter of 18 February. In exchange for action by Skopje on these issues, Athens would be willing to take certain steps. This two-stage process was necessary, however, before direct negotiations could resume under the auspices of the United Nations. He also raised the question of procedural matters concerning the modalities of a two-stage process, but remained firm in the view that Skopje had to meet the Greek requirements before a dialogue could be resumed. The Foreign Minister conveyed his Government's appreciation for the good offices of the United Nations.

Foreign Minister Crvenkovski, for his part, suggested a resumption of direct discussions under United Nations auspices, in order to find a balanced solution to contentious issues. He stated that Greece would first have to lift the measures announced by Prime Minister Papandreou on 16 February. He was of the view that all outstanding issues ought to be discussed together, since only thus could compromises be made. Foreign Minister Crvenkovski did not accept the two-stage process suggested by Foreign Minister Papoulias. He stated that the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia did not wish to have any mediator other than the United Nations, with myself and Mr. Vance acting under the guidance of the Security Council.

Mr. Vance told both parties that the situation was increasing in gravity, and that time was of the essence in reaching a settlement. If a mutually agreeable settlement could not be reached by the parties, peace in the region might be put at risk. He urged the parties to redouble their efforts to find common ground.

In order to help them do so, Mr. Vance submitted a draft accord confirming the existing common frontier as an inviolable international border and establishing measures for confidence-building, friendship and neighbourly cooperation, based in substantial part on the draft treaty proposed to the parties on 14 May 1993 (S/25855, annex V). The parties expressed preliminary views on the draft accord to Mr. Vance. It was agreed that Mr. Vance would continue to remain in close contact with the parties and to stand ready to assist them in their efforts to reach a settlement of the remaining issues between them.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI